

# Whole of Government Focuses on Lifesaving Measures, Power Restoration for Hurricane Ida Response

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WASHINGTON -- A tremendous coordination effort is taking place at all levels of government and utilizing assets from across the nation to conduct life-safety and rescue efforts in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Emergency and first responder teams began their operations early Monday morning. From Texas to Alabama, search and rescue teams from more than 15 states, FEMA and the U.S. Coast Guard are conducting search and rescue operations across the impacted areas.

The U.S. Northern Command is supporting logistics and coordination to move equipment and supplies from several Incident Support Bases across Mississippi and Louisiana. FEMA deployed 17 Urban Search and Rescue teams with more than 950 personnel to assist with these efforts.

Federal and state agencies remain focused on supporting power restoration efforts. Thousands of power restoration crews are working throughout Louisiana and Mississippi. Crews are asking residents in those areas to be extremely careful and avoid any downed power lines.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has an Emergency Power Planning and Response Team to assist with the efforts. They are also supporting debris removal, temporary roofing, infrastructure assessment and temporary housing in Louisiana.

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. approved [Louisiana's request for a major disaster declaration](#) on Sunday. The declaration authorizes federal funding available to affected individuals in 25 parishes. Residents and business owners who sustained losses in the designated areas can begin applying for assistance by registering online at [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov).

President Biden approved [Louisiana's](#) request for an emergency declaration on Aug. 27, and [Mississippi's](#) request on Aug. 28. The declarations authorize FEMA to coordinate



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disaster relief efforts in support of the states by identifying, mobilizing and providing equipment and resources necessary to alleviate hardship and suffering of the local population. Additionally, the declarations authorize FEMA to provide appropriate assistance for required emergency measures to save lives and to protect property, public health and safety in all 64 Louisiana parishes and 24 Mississippi counties and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

FEMA received Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves' request for an amendment to the [emergency declaration](#) to include all 84 counties for emergency protective measures, including direct federal assistance. The request is under review.

**Residents who have evacuated should not return home until local officials say it is safe to do so.** Thousands of people have stayed in shelters coordinated by the American Red Cross in Louisiana and Mississippi. The Red Cross and emergency management officials expect a rise in temporary shelter numbers as people experience sustained power outages or cannot return to damaged homes. If someone needs temporary shelter, call your local 2-1-1 or look for shelter locations on your phone via the Red Cross app. FEMA activated several mutual-aid agreements for more than 160 ambulances and emergency medical service providers for evacuation support. Additionally, eight fixed-wing and seven rotary air ambulances were staged for patient evacuation, as needed.

**Stay informed.** Individuals in Louisiana can text IDA to 67283 for storm updates from the [Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness](#). Individuals in Alabama should follow the guidance of local officials or visit the [Alabama Emergency Management Agency](#) website. For storm updates in Mississippi, visit [Hurricane Ida – Mississippi Emergency Management Agency](#).

**Use a generator safely. Keep generators outside and far away from your home.** Never use a generator inside a home, basement, shed or garage even if doors and windows are open. Windows, doors and vents could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors. Read both the label on your generator and the owner's manual and follow the instructions.

**Stay inside. If you must leave your home:**

- **Don't drive through flood waters.** Almost half of all flash flood deaths happen in vehicles. When in your car, look out for flooding in low lying areas at bridges and at highway dips. As little as 6 inches of water may cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- **Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded.** Roads may have weakened



and could collapse under the weight of a car.

- **Stay out of floodwater.** Standing water may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines or contain hazards such as human and livestock waste, dangerous debris, contaminants that can lead to illness, or wild or stray animals.

**Power Outages can impact the safety of food** in your refrigerator and freezer.

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed to keep your food as fresh as possible. The refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours. A full freezer will keep the temperature for about 48 hours. Use coolers with ice if necessary.
- Throw away any food that has been exposed to a temperature of 40°Fahrenheit (4°Celsius) or higher for two hours or more or that has an unusual odor, color or texture. When in doubt, throw it out!
- Never taste food or rely on appearance or odor to determine its safety. Some foods may look and smell fine, but if they have been at room temperature too long, heat-resistant bacteria that cause food-borne illnesses can start growing quickly.

**Visit FEMA's resources online** for response and recovery social media banners, videos, for disaster survivors and the public. These images are in different languages including English, Chinese, Spanish, Vietnamese and ASL. For general hurricane preparedness and safety tips, visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) and [Listo.gov](https://www.listo.gov).

